

Powder Point Bridge

NOTES ON POWDER POINT

by Samuel Weston, April 1910.

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Now let us begin at the head of the peninsula of the Point. Cove Street was formerly a cartway through the pasture land to get to the town landing at the bend of the Duck Hill or Cove River, on the shore of which all the hay which grew on the extensive tracts of salt meadow on the north side of the river, was landed from scows at that bend and then carted to its owners. Cove Street was made a public highway in 1833. More than a century ago, two plots of land extending east of it were owned by Asa Chandler and Sylvanus Drew, the former owning the south lot fronting on what is now Powder Point Avenue; the latter the lot running north to the bank or slope of Cove River. When Mr. Chandler owned the south lot, there was a very old house standing where Miss Laura Ellison's now is. Next after Mr. Chandler, it was owned by my grandfather, Jephthah Delano, who was a shoe-maker and also tender of the tide grist-mill near the south end of the bridge over Blue Fish River.

Back of the old Chandler house there was a fine apple orchard in its day; in front was a lawn or grass plot dropping three feet or so into a pond hole of water and mud; after the street or road was built; then the salt marsh as now exists. Jephthah Delano's daughter Abigail married Isaac Chandler Sr., a mariner. He built a house next east of her father's on the southeast corner of the lot. In the 1812 war with England, Isaac while at sea, was captured and taken to Halifax and imprisoned. While he was in prison, the mortgage on the house ran out. Benjamin Cushman of Mattapoisett, a shoe-maker, foreclosed and took the house away from the Chandlers. He married Laura Bryant of Plympton, grew rich, and outlived all his family, - wife and two daughters, lived alone for some

years and then was found dead in front of his desk, apparently counting his dollars, as quite a sum of money was found thereon.

We will now see what further changes took place on the lot of the old house and homestead. The house whose rear now is and always was, on Cove Street and fronting easterly on Powder Point Avenue, was built by Nathaniel Snow, husband of Sallie, an older sister of Abigail Delano. At one time Asa Sampson owned and occupied it and his widow for many years after him. They had Henry, by trade a house-painter, who dropped dead Feb. 4, 1881, and Nancy Cooper, who occupied the house until her death in 1892. Then Charles Peterson came into possession of it and more recently the Ellison heirs. In this house Aunt Irene Brewster lived and kept boarders for many years; she was powerfully strong and as good as was strong; a most excellent nurse and a helper to each and all. She was famous for having a large pig(hog) when she had any.

I most forgot the old homestead and will now take a look at it. Jephthah Delano had three sons, - Asa C., Henry, and Jephthah Jr. The first two learned the cabinet maker's trade in Boston, and when I was a child, returned to Duxbury and set up their business, with a shop on the westerly boundary line, now Cove Street, put in horse-power and machinery, tore the old house down and built a double dwelling house in which both families lived, - the one now owned and occupied by Miss Laura Ellison. To provide for their father and mother, they moved part of the old house which was of more recent construction than the original, close on to the westerly line where Cove Street now is, leaving a drive-way between the two houses.

The use of coal was unknown in those days, but Aunt Irene always had an abundance of wood on hand, all seasoned, chopped, and ready for use. One year it was piled, by mistake or not, so far into Asa's and Henry's driveway, that teams could not pass in or out of their door-

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yard. Nothing was said on either side, but one night between sunset and sunrise, that high pile of wood was moved two or three feet back on to her own premises. The wonder was how it was done, for no one ^{could} discover that a single stick had been moved, but that the whole pile had been changed was evident enough from the ground where it had formerly stood. How it was managed was never known outside of those who did it!

The next, or second lot next east of Cove Street, was granted to Henry Sampson who was but a youth of fourteen when he came to Plymouth on the Mayflower in 1620. He was one of the earlier settlers in Duxbury. He married Ann Plummer; they lived and died on the six acre lot then granted him. The east and west boundary lines of this lot ran about parallel, with Powder Point Avenue on the south and Duck Hill or Cove River on the north. There was no road then where Powder Point Avenue now is, only the upland banks with two or three feet drop to the salt marsh in front. Probably his heirs owned and occupied his house many years after him; but in the course of time, Aaron Bisbee owned this property, then a complete parallelogram. A change however, came in the shape. The lot now shows the southeast corner to have been cut into for a house lot, and the northwest corner to have been extended to Cove St. This change took place about 1806. I have said that Sylvanus Drew owned the land adjoining the south lot at the northeast corner, and his son, Capt. Reuben Drew wanted a lot on which to build a house. He induced Aaron Bisbee to swap or exchange the southeast corner lot for the northwest corner lot, or Drew lot, the Bisbee plan then becoming the shape it now is. Capt. Reuben Drew built on this new lot in 1807, the house Mrs. Sally Taylor now is using as a boarding house. Aaron Bisbee married Sarah Soule, two of their sons settling in Maine, and their descendants still living there. Their daughter Jemima, married Elnathan Weston and his grandson, Nathaniel Weston, next owned the Henry Sampson estate. The house was a very old one in tumbled-down condition;

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so it was torn down, and the present large one, colonial style, built in 1812, on the old site. There he and his wife, Martha Delano, lived and reared a family of nine children, six girls and three boys. From the Weston ownership, it passed into the possession of a nephew, Dr. Nathaniel Emerson, an able, popular surgeon of Boston, Mass. and owner of the Emerson Hospital at Forest Hills.

Next to Henry Sampson's (later Aaron Bisbee's) stood an old house, built by whom I know not, but Samuel Weston lived in it at the time of the birth of his eldest son Nathaniel, September 2, 1779; from him these facts were obtained. Then there came a time when the land on which the old house stood was wanted for a ship-yard. The house next east of the old one, was a large dwelling house, two stories in height, owned and occupied by Arunah Weston. He bought a tract of land at Broad Cove, in the town of Bristol, Maine, a wilderness in 1785. His Duxbury home, standing a few rods northeast of that then occupied by Samuel Weston, he took down and carried to Maine, rebuilt it, and set up a grist-mill. There he lived and died, having raised a large family. The house he took from Duxbury was burned many years after his death. The old house previously spoken of as the abode of Samuel Weston, was moved onto the cellar from which the Arunah Weston house was taken, was raised up, and a story put under it, an addition made to it, an ell on the north and a carriage house on the east. It was owned and occupied by ^{Master Workman} ~~Capt.~~ Charles Drew, shipwright; next owned by William Paulding, also shipwright; now in 1910, by Capt. William F. Adams.

About 1830, the circular road was discontinued and a short piece built from Drew's wharf to meet Powder Point Road and King Caesar Road. What is now Powder Point Avenue until 1840, was I think, only a private cartway, two gates across it.

As I have said, on the plot of land obtained from Aaron Bisbee, Capt. Reuben Drew built a large house where he lived and died. He had

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two wives and a large family of boys and girls; his father Sylvanus, owned and lived in the house east of Reuben's, built when or by whom I know not.

The ship-yard was where Mrs. Steele's cottage now stands, on the site of the house that Nathaniel Weston was born in, - the one moved onto Arunah Weston's cellar when his house was sent to Maine. Many fine vessels were built in this yard, William Paulding being the last to use it. In digging a well for water to supply the steam box, the cellar of the old house Samuel Weston lived in, was dug through. Many a kettle of molasses candy we boys made in steam shed of a winter's evening. In the field north of the shipyard, the fish-tables were located, also the salt-basins with their four slopes to the roofs, in which the water pumped from the ocean was exposed that it might evaporate, leaving the salt white as snow. The picture presented a fine view, having the appearance of a compact village with their peaked roofs and chimney in the center. I regret that picture has vanished.

The vessels from that yard were launched across the road, which then circled half way up to Capt. Adam's house, then east across Glade Creek, and to meet King Caesar Road. After the removal of the old house, Master Charles and Capt. Reuben Drew made use of the ^{land for a} ship-yard, built also a wharf and on it a two story house which was taken down and shipped to go to San Francisco, about 1850. But the vessel carrying it was wrecked and it never reached there. That was in the Gold Fever rush. Many a vessel was built in that lot, as good as ever sailed the seas.

This brings us to the east of Glade Creek. In 1636, five young men, ^{Frank} Richard Bease, George Partridge, Morris Truant, William Myricks, and ^{Jobes} John Dones, had granted them 25 acres, more or less, / the tract extending easterly to the west boundary of what is now F.B. Knapp land. In the same year, George Soule was granted all the remaining land on Powder Point. Whether the said Soules later came into possession of the northwest corner of the land owned by the five young men, I cannot say, but it has always been

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in Soule possession since early acquired by them. The tract granted the five men, passed from one to the other in small parcels for many years^{**}; then Ezra Weston bought 6 1/4 acres from the southeast corner. George Soule's youngest daughter marries John Peterson, before 1665. He bought a strip of land from her father on the south side of the cartway extending southward to the Salt Bay, the west boundary corresponding to what Mr. Wright now owns. * Isaac Peterson, son of John, bought adjoining on the east a strip of land from George Soule's grandson. John Peterson willed his estate to Isaac's son Daniel, providing that if Daniel died with no son, Joseph Peterson, brother of John, was to have the property, paying the appraised value. Daniel left no son; Joseph however permitted Isaac's widow and her three daughters, Priscilla, Gael, and Faith, and Daniel two daughters, Mary and Orphoa, to own, live on, and enjoy, their birth-right home. Very good of Joseph. The writer remembers the house which was very old, and which stood until 1840-5, when Ezra Weston 3rd had it demolished. Priscilla Peterson married Eliphaz Weston; so he became owner of her portion. The share of the other heirs passed in to the hands of Eliphaz, and then to Warren and Ezra Weston. They owned all the Point land south of Powder Point Avenue.

* Ezra Weston, + Ezra Jr. bought of George Soule's great-great-grandson (Joseph Cushman, grandson of Joseph Soule.) in 1810 (Req. of Deeds. Bk 112, p 240)

** Partridge + Merrick sold to Tobes in 1649; Tenant sold to Solomon Lemmer in 1645. Tobes sold 15A to Henry Howland before 1671. Ezra Weston bought from John Soule, great^{great} gr-son of George, in 1766